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4TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC
BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20460

November 15, 2019

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

We write to express our concerns regarding the recent actions by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) addressing the toxicity level of ethylene oxide (EtO). As members who represent districts that have been affected by ethylene oxide emissions, our constituents have expressed their alarm over carcinogens polluting the air. We are gravely concerned that relaxed EtO standards on state levels will threaten clean air protections nationally and further endanger the health of our constituents.

This past September, the TCEQ Toxicology, Risk Assessment, and Research Division proposed a four parts per billion health-protective concentration for ethylene oxide. We are concerned that if implemented, this change will undermine the federal standards of EtO emissions established by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) Evaluation of the Inhalation Carcinogenicity of EtO.

In 2016, the EPA concluded that chronic exposure to EtO is carcinogenic to humans and can cause damage to the brain and nervous system. As the Office of Air and Radiation at the EPA works towards its imminent Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, it is vital that states do not undermine the protections established by the EPA IRIS, which has been praised by leading health and medical professionals, including the National Academy of Science.


We seek your assurance that the TCEQ toxicity assessment of ethylene oxide will not threaten the integrity of the EPA's 2016 assessment, and that you are committed to maintaining the IRIS standard, which was the product of 18 years of research and work including time for public comments.

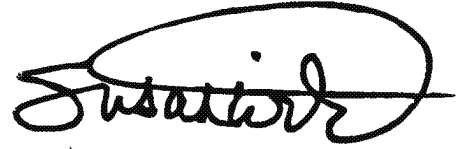
As public servants, we have the duty to protect the interests and safety of American people, and not prioritize the bottom line of the chemical industry. We are committed to working with your agency to improve technology that can further reduce the harm of EtO emissions and foster innovation that will produce safer methods of sterilizing medical equipment.

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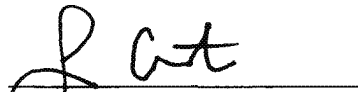
DECATUR OFFICE
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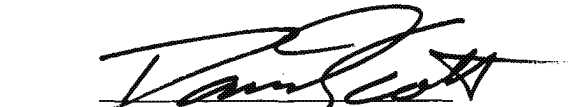
Sincerely,

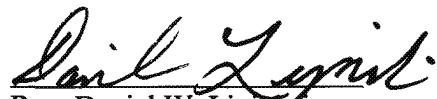

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Member of Congress





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